

Teamwork

NEWS

April 2004



A NEWSLETTER FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



Commissioner Neeley confers with two participants at the Workers' Compensation Educational Conference following his luncheon speech to the group.

Workers' Comp reform focus of educational conference

Commissioner Neeley spoke to the Seventh Annual Workers' Compensation Educational Conference at the Nashville Airport Marriott on April 26, updating the group on Workers' Compensation reform.

Commissioner Neeley said last year Governor Bredesen charged him and Economic and Community Development Commissioner Matt Kisber to travel over the state to listen to what the problems were with

Workers' Comp, to evaluate those problems, and to present an agenda for a working paper. The problems turned out to be consistent, and the SD1 forms proved crucial in providing four years of Tennessee-specific data that were important to developing the reform package. (SD1 forms are statistical data forms required on all Workers' Comp cases when the

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Workers' Comp passes

Governor Bredesen's Workers' Compensation Reform bill passed the General Assembly on May 20, 2004. The Senate tacked on three amendments, and the House concurred; the bill is now on the way to the governor for signature.

New TDLWD appointments

Commissioner Neeley recently announced the following appointments to positions in the Tennessee Department of Labor & Workforce Development:

Don Ingram is the new **administrator for Employment Security**. Don was previously director of UI Benefit Operations and Tech Support. Don is a long-term, career service employee with 20 years of employment with the department. He attended the University of Tennessee, Middle Tennessee State University, and Tennessee State University where he majored in advertising and public relations. He has served as an interviewer in both UI and Job Service, manager of the Nashville

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Don Ingram



Marie Moss



Melinda Williams

Appointments (Cont.)

South Local Office and the Franklin Local Office, and manager of the Dislocated Worker Unit.

Marie Moss and **Melinda Williams** will serve as **assistant administrators** for Employment Security. **Marie Moss** has been employed with the state for 22 years. She is being promoted from her position as UI integrity director. Marie has also served in the Employer Accounts section and Benefit Payment Control. She is a licensed CPA and a Certified Governmental Financial Manager.

Melinda Williams currently serves as director of Employer Services. Prior to her current position she worked with Employment Security in Job Service and Unemployment Insurance from 1988 to 1996. Melinda worked as human resource director for Big Bend Technology, an automotive supplier to Nissan, then returned to our department in 2003.

Other appointments and promotions are as follows;

Mark Stiles, director of the UI Call Center

Tyrone Sullivan, director of Information Technology for Employment Security

Mary Rollins, director of UI Benefit Operations and Tech Support

Charles White, director of UI Integrity

IAWP announces Logan S. Chambers Individual Scholarship

The International level of IAWP offers an individual and a group scholarship. We will introduce the Logan S. Chambers Individual Scholarship here.

This scholarship is designed to provide financial assistance to IAWP members or their dependents who wish to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities in a course(s) of study that pertains to employment and training work, or toward a degree program that relates to job performance and/or promotional possibilities.

The grant applicant must be an IAWP full member or a dependent of an IAWP full member to be eligible and may apply for a grant on a yearly basis (January 1 - December 31). IAWP

will determine the eligibility status by the fiscal year in which the actual grant payment is made. Dependents status must meet all five dependency tests in the IRS code (see IAWP website). The maximum grant amounts are based on the number of the member's consecutive years of IAWP full membership, which may include the current membership year. Maximum grants will not exceed \$500.

There is more information regarding the criteria, course requirements, and application procedures on the IAWP website, www.iawponline.org or you may contact Joan Dowlen@state.tn.us.

Employee commendation

To: **Bonnie Grayson**,
Collierville TDLWD
From: A claimant

"I am taking this opportunity to thank you so much for being such a sweet, patient, and kind person. It is a pleasure to call or come by your office and be greeted with a friendly hello.

I wanted to make sure you know how much your kindness is appreciated. Each time that I have had to call or come by your office to inquire about various things, you have been unfailingly nice – especially this last Monday, as I was frantic when I was surveyed on Sunday on the TIPS line and denied approval for this week; after coming into the Collierville office, you gently put me at ease.

It is very important to me that you know how vital you are to the Collierville TDLWD office and for your supervisor and co-workers to know as well.

Again, thank you so much for sharing your kindness and generosity with each person; it is greatly appreciated."



Carolyn Shepherd shows off the EAP trophy the TDLWD won for participation in EAP Awareness Month.

TDLWD receives EAP recognition

Carolyn Shepherd accepted Employee Assistance Program (EAP) March Awareness month trophy for Outstanding Participation by the TDLWD during the month-long observance for the following activities: Special fair to highlight the important services that EAP offers Contest for first, second, and third place for the best EAP display EAP Awareness Day miniature golf tournament put on by the Personnel section Three employees entered the "Tell Your Story" contest.

"I want to thank everyone who participated and helped promote EAP for the department," said Carolyn. "There was a taller trophy for the Most Outstanding Creativity and Participation, so let's all be thinking creatively about ideas and projects for next year."



Commissioner Neeley congratulates Employment Security administrator **Chris Betts** at a reception on his last day with the department.

Chris says s'long to TDLWD

Friends and co-workers gathered the middle of April to wish Chris Betts well in his retirement as administrator for the TDLWD Employment Security division. He had 32 years service with the department.

Chris worked in both the Tax and Benefits sides of the Unemployment Insurance program. Under his leadership Tennessee became a national leader in claim processing and payment.

He began employment with the department in 1972 as a tax auditor and was director of Benefit Operations before becoming assistant commissioner for Unemployment Insurance for the former Department of Employment Security.

"Chris has been a real plus for this department. We will miss him and will continue to use his advice," said Commissioner Neeley. "The recognition he and his staff have received over the years is remarkable. We're proud to have had him on our team, and I wish him the best."



Chris surprises long-time associate **Caroline Reed** with roses to express his appreciation for her hard work and support over the years.

Johnnie Wheeler wins international recognition

The Tennessee Chapter of the International Association of Workforce Professional (IAWP) chose Johnnie Wheeler, Director of the Upper Cumberland Career Center, as their recipient of the chapter's Citation Award. Ms. Wheeler was presented the award at the association's annual conference held recently in Pigeon Forge. Her nomination was submitted into International Association competition with recipients from the 49 other states and 11 foreign countries. Ms. Wheeler received 2nd place in the International Association competition.

The Citation Award is the highest honor that IAWP bestows on an individual. It recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to the association and to workforce development programs. The long and distinguished list of 1st place recipients began in 1948 when the association honored US Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins. Two US Presidents – Harry S. Truman and John F. Kennedy – along with numerous US senators and representatives, notable employers, educators, media personalities, and high-ranking government officials from both the US and abroad have received this honor during the contest's history.

Ms. Wheeler was cited for her outstanding services toward professional advancement and for outstanding work in encouraging employers and customers to use workforce development services, thus enhancing the relationship between workforce development services providers and the community.



Johnnie Wheeler (left) receives Citation Award from **Cindy Key** at the IAWP conference in Pigeon Forge. She went on to receive 2nd place in the international contest.



Bob Hickerson, Teresa Broome, Rebecca Hickerson, Freida Begarly, and Jean Young are pictured at the IAWP conference.



Knoxville Career Center staff pictured on the Career Center float in the Dogwood Arts Festival Parade in Knoxville are (from left) **Sara Padgett**, **Bob Thomas**, **Sharon Smith**, **Connie Harrison**, **Emily Hatfield**, **Christy London**, **Tim Witt**, **Vaughn Smith**, and **Sherry Watt**.

TDLWD represented in Knoxville festival

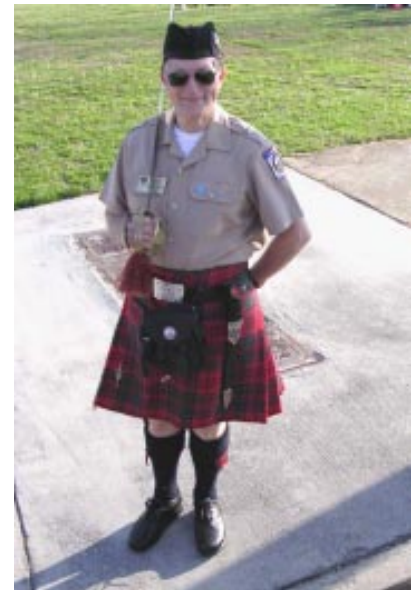
Staff of the Tennessee Career Center at University Avenue took part in Knoxville's Dogwood Arts Festival Parade in April.

Thousands lined the parade route, and the group was shown on WBIR-TV Channel 10, the CBS affiliate in Knoxville. Sea Ray Boats furnished the boat and the driver used by the group.

Knoxville labor market analyst **Lee Grant**, who recently retired, is a piper with the Scottish American Military Society in Knoxville. The group marches as a unit in the parade each year, as well as at other Scottish events including the

Gatlinburg Highland Games and the Murfreesboro Highland Games.

Thanks to **Tim Witt** for sending the information and photos.



That's **Lee Grant** in the Grant tartan kilt.

Workers' Comp Conference (Cont.)



Workers' Comp staff taking care of registration are (from left) **Darlene Carver-McDonald**, **Judy Sharpe**, **Peggy Haley**, and **Patsy Bumbalough**.

court tries or approves a settlement or when a settlement is approved by the TDLWD.)

Governor Bredesen's Workers' Comp reform package was introduced to the legislature on April 20. Commissioner Neeley stressed some of the major provisions of the bill, including the following:

- The PPD (permanent partial disability) claim was the one item

consistently mentioned across the state as needing attention. The bill lowers the "multiplier" cap for PPDs from 2.5 to 1.5 to determine how much compensation an injured worker should receive for a PPD.

- Misconduct leave will not be a part of reconsideration.
- PTD (permanent total disability) will stay as it is.
- The cap for TTD (temporary total

disability) will change from 100% of the average weekly wage to 105% the first year, then 110% the third and subsequent years.

- Lump sum payments to settle medical expenses cannot be made for at least five years in PPD cases.
- Timely payment will be required following knowledge of disability, or penalty will be assessed of employer.
- The state will fund a series of grants for safety and health and establish standards of how to apply for them.
- The state will provide a form to employers to furnish to employees stating they were given a three-doctor option for evaluation and treatment.
- Self-insured employers will have bonding raised from \$125,000 to \$500,000.
- The bill gives the TDLWD the right to establish a medical fee schedule effective July 1, 2005.
- If either an employer or employee disagrees over the medical impairment rating, he can request review by an independent medical examiner.
- The state will make it voluntary for either party to request case management.

"We're trying to bring uniformity and predictability when it comes to Workmen's Compensation cases," said Commissioner Neeley. "It's been a grueling process, but reform is necessary for good economic development and job growth and for doing the right thing for the future of our citizens."



Workers' Comp conference luncheon as Commissioner Neeley speaks.

Teamwork News



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